

## **National Park Labs: An Overview**

### **Overall Goal**

The goal of the three-year National Park Labs program is to enhance the quality of science and mathematics education and to foster stewardship of national park resources, through a focus on environmental issues at the high school level.

### **National Park Lab Sites**

The National Park Foundation staff coordinated the selection of five sites, based on a review of proposals from national parks. The proposal submission and review processes occurred during the fall of 1997, and the five selected sites were announced in January of 1998.

The National Parks that are developing model National Park Labs are Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Lowell National Historical Park, National Capital Region Parks and Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. These sites are geographically distributed across the country and represent variety of program themes and goals.

### **Shared Goals**

The five National Park Labs share the following goals:

- To promote the parks as learning laboratories and provide opportunities for secondary level teachers to use national park resources to support their curriculum objectives.
- To enhance the quality of science and math education for high school students.
- To increase knowledge of park resources, the National Park System and associated resources.
- To raise awareness about the importance of park resources and stewardship.

### **Shared Components**

Five components of the National Park Labs program tie it to the broader educational initiative, *Parks as Classrooms* -- curriculum development, teacher training, student field trips evaluation and website.

### **Evaluation**

The national evaluation plan assesses both the work of each of the five sites and the overall effectiveness of the national program. It addresses the degree to which the staff in each of the five sites has successfully met proposed goals and the degree to which the five sites together provide models for the dissemination and replication of high

school environmental education programs that use national park resources. The results of the evaluation will be published in a book and made available on the World Wide Web.

### **Funding**

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